

Notice of Independent Review

**CORRECTIONS:**  
**Failed to send report to**  
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**REVIEWER'S REPORT**

**DATE NOTICE SENT TO ALL PARTIES:** 12/21/12

**IRO CASE #:**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH PHYSICIAN OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO REVIEWED THE DECISION:**

M.D., board certified in Neurology with Added Qualifications in Pain Management, fellowship trained in Pain Medicine

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE:**

Lumbar selective nerve root injection to the right L4-5 level.

**REVIEW OUTCOME:**

Upon independent review, the reviewer finds that the previous adverse determination/adverse determinations should be:

- Upheld (Agree)  
 Overturned (Disagree)  
 Partially Overturned (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

<i>Primary Diagnosis Code</i>	<i>Service Being Denied</i>	<i>Billing Modifier</i>	<i>Type of Review</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Date(s) of Service</i>	<i>Amount Billed</i>	<i>Date of Injury</i>	<i>DWC Claim #</i>	<i>Upheld Overturn</i>
724.02 722.10 724.2 724.4	Nerve root injection		Prosp.						Overturn

**INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW:**

1. TDI case assignment.
2. Letter of denial 11/15/12 & 11/26/12, including criteria used in the denial.
3. Orthopedic evaluations and follow up 09/18/12 – 10/31/12.
4. Therapy evaluations and follow up 01/20/12 – 11/12/12.

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY (SUMMARY):**

This claimant sustained a work-related injury on xx/xx/xx. The injury resulted in subsequent low back pain radiating into his right groin and right medial thigh. MRI scan of the lumbar spine showed some disc bulging at L3/L4 with facet hypertrophy causing mild neural foraminal narrowing. Similar findings were described at L4/L5 and L5/S1 with disc bulging combined with facet hypertrophy causing narrowing of the neural foramina. Electrodiagnostic studies reportedly showed a mild subacute right L4 radicular dysfunction. The claimant has been treated with medications and physical therapy but continues to be troubled with pain. A selective nerve root block at the L4/L5 level on the right was requested, both for diagnostic as well as therapeutic purposes.

**ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION, INCLUDING CLINICAL BASIS, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE DECISION:**

Upon review of the previous denials, it appears that the criteria of a clearly herniated disc compressing a nerve root is not present. However, symptoms of radiculopathy can occur without noticeable compression on imaging due to the dynamic nature of the spine and intermittent compression of nerve roots can still occur, especially if the neural foramina are noted to be compressed on imaging to any degree. Additionally, radicular symptoms can occur with chemical irritation of a nerve root from disc material, tears that may not be noticeable on MRI scan, etc. This claimant's presentation does appear to be consistent with a radiculopathy, which can be further clarified with the requested selective nerve root block in addition to potentially providing some therapeutic effect. Therefore, it is my opinion that this request is medically reasonable and necessary.

**A DESCRIPTION AND THE SOURCE OF THE SCREENING CRITERIA OR OTHER CLINICAL BASIS USED TO MAKE THE DECISION:**

ACOEM-American College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine UM Knowledgebase

AHCPR-Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality Guidelines

DWC-Division of Workers' Compensation Policies or Guidelines

European Guidelines for Management of Chronic Low Back Pain

Interqual Criteria

Medical judgment, clinical experience and expertise in accordance with accepted medical Standards

Mercy Center Consensus Conference Guidelines

Milliman Care Guidelines

ODG-Office Disability Guidelines & Treatment Guidelines

Pressley Reed, The Medical Disability Advisor

Texas Guidelines for Chiropractic Quality Assurance & Practice Parameters

Texas TACADA Guidelines

TMF Screening Criteria Manual

Peer-reviewed, nationally accepted medical literature (Provide a Description):

Other evidence-based, scientifically valid, outcome-focused guidelines (Provide a Description)